REMARKS

Claims 1 and 10 are amended to define one main aspect of the present invention with greater particularity over the cited Wain patent. Wain (in Figure 1, Column 6, line 33-37, and Column 6, line 17-29) describes using a modem to send control signals to remote gaming machines from a main control device (central computer) in which "the RAM 18 of each [gaming] machine is fed with program information from the main control device 3 appropriate to a particular game" (Column 6, lines 37-41). However, in the present invention, as now more clearly defined in the amendments to system Claim 1 and method Claim 10, each game playing satellite station accesses a database of game-specific command sets for operating game programs on the satellite and loads a game-specific command set in response to a generic command for a specific game program issued from the mission control computer. In this manner, the mission control computer of the present invention does not need to be tied at all times to the operation of specific game programs on each of the satellites, but can perform the mission control functions administratively by issuing generic commands to launch, modify, or terminate game playing (start/stop/etc.) on a satellite, while allowing the satellite to control the specific game program being played at a game station. Thus, amended Claims 1 and 10 are deemed to define the invention to be patentably distinct over the cited Wain reference.

Claims 3-9 depend from Claim 1, and Claims 11, 12 and 14 depend from Claim 10, and are deemed patentably distinct on the same grounds, and are further amended for greater clarity and consistency with the amendments to Claims 1 and 10. Claim 13 is cancelled as redundant in view of amended Claim 10. Claims 2, 5, 7, and 9 are also amended to correct the indefiniteness cited by the Examiner. A new Claim 15 directed to the form of communication between the satellite control program and the game program is added depending from Claim 1.

Claim 2 is amended into independent form to be directed to another aspect of the present invention, namely the novel use of keyword parsing of text log files generated by the game programs to provide a status report from the game playing satellite computer to the mission control computer. Game programs are typically configured to generate log files of the game status so that they can be tracked (manually) by the game operator. As now more clearly defined

in amended Claim 2, the invention uses the game log files to parse for certain keywords indicating the status of the game and to communicate the status of the game program on the satellite computer to the mission control computer. In this manner, status reports can be provided by the satellites to the mission control computer without the mission control computer having to specifically access the log files for each game program running on each satellite.

In contrast, the cited Acres patent only describes a communication method between central and remote computers using message processing. It would not have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the application's invention, to use keyword parsing of the log file tracking feature of the game program in order to generate the status reports from the satellite to the mission control computer. Acres does not describe or suggest using log files to generate system status reports, but instead employs pre-configured messages (see Figs. 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, etc.) to control the system.

The Ehrman reference teaches a system where a database controls what the system can do or not do by a set of "rules" stored in the database and maintained as "objects". Ehrman does not describe or suggest accessing game-specific command sets to control a game program on a satellite computer in response to a generic game start command from mission control, nor using keyword parsing of log files to generate system status reports.

Thus, amended Claim 2 is deemed to define the second aspect of the invention of log-file generation of status reports to be patentably distinct over the cited references.

In summary, all remaining Claims 1-12 and 15 are deemed to be patentably distinct over the cited prior art and in condition for allowance, and it is requested that a Notice of Allowance be issued therefor upon reconsideration.

This response is filed with a certificate of mailing within the time allowed for response, and with total and independent claims after amendment numbering within the limits originally paid for with the filing fee. However, if any fees are deemed to be due for acceptance of this response, authorization is hereby given to charge our Deposit Account No. 502633.

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING:

The undersigned certifies that the foregoing is being mailed on June 18, 2003, by depositing it with the U.S. Postal Service, first class postage paid, addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Respectfully submitted,
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AMENDMENT: CLAIMS

(Currently Amended)

1. A mission control (administration) system for controlling multiple game playing satellite computers on a network comprising:

(a) a mission control computer which operates administrative programs for performing administrative functions for multiple game playing stations connected by the network;

(b) a plurality of game playing satellite computers provided at respective game playing stations each maintaining a plurality of game programs and having access to a database of game-specific command sets for controlling the play of any of the plurality of game programs that may be played at the game playing station, wherein each game-specific command set is configured with corresponding game control codes for controlling a respective one of the game programs;

(c) a network connecting the mission control computer to the plurality of game playing satellite computers,

(d) wherein said mission control computer includes a mission control program for administration of ~~controlling~~ the plurality of games available to be played on the game playing satellite computers by issuing generic game start ~~control~~ commands to start any selected game programs on any of the game playing satellite computers, and

(e) wherein each of said game playing satellite computers includes a satellite game control program for controlling ~~each of~~ the plurality of game programs available to be played on the satellite computer, said satellite game control program, upon ~~by~~ receiving a generic ~~control~~ command to start a selected game program issued by said mission control computer, thereupon accessing the corresponding game-specific command set for a selected game program to be started on the satellite computer ~~and~~ loading in response thereto the selected game program and the ~~a~~ game-specific command set corresponding to the selected game program for controlling the selected game program from said game playing satellite computer, and ~~by~~ for periodically providing said mission control computer with a status report of the status of the selected game program being played on the satellite computer.

(Currently Amended)

2. A mission control system ~~according to Claim 1,~~ for controlling a game playing

satellite computer on a network comprising:

(a) a mission control computer which operates administrative programs for performing administrative functions for the playing of game programs on a game playing satellite computer connected to the mission control computer by the network;

(b) at least one game playing satellite computer maintaining a plurality of game programs thereon which is connected to the mission control computer via the network;

(c) wherein said game playing satellite computer includes a satellite game control program for controlling each of the plurality of game programs thereon, and upon receiving a generic game start command to start a selected game program issued by said mission control computer, for loading in response thereto the selected game program and a game-specific command set corresponding to the selected game program, and for periodically providing said mission control computer with a status report of the status of the selected game program being played on the satellite computer,

wherein ~~a~~ each game program on ~~a~~ the game playing satellite computer is configured to generates a text log file tracking the operation of the game program being played on the game playing satellite computer, and said satellite game control program parses the text log files for predetermined keywords indicative of desired status information on the operation of the game program and provides the status report based on the parsed keywords ~~as the game program status information~~ to the mission control ~~program~~ computer.

(Currently Amended)

3. A system according to Claim 1, wherein ~~a~~ each game program on a satellite computer generates one or more of the following sources of information tracking the operation of the game program, and said satellite game control program parses the source of information for desired status information and provides the status ~~information~~ report based thereon to the mission control program: game log files; dialog boxes or windows opened by the game program; messages from the Notification API; and a method used by the game program for external communications.

(Currently Amended)

4. A system according to Claim 1, wherein the satellite game control program maintains ~~a~~ said database of game-specific command sets for each of the game programs offered on the satellite computer, and, when a generic game start ~~control~~ command is issued by the mission

control computer to start a particular game program on the satellite computer, the satellite control program loads the corresponding game-specific command set from its database to operate the particular game program.

(Currently Amended)

5. A system according to Claim 4, wherein said game-specific command sets are derived by analyzing each game program and determining ~~the~~ a standard configuration of ~~common~~ activation, termination and control logic control codes for ~~the~~ each game program.

(Original)

6. A system according to Claim 1, wherein said mission control program maintains a database of game data based upon information provided by the satellite game playing computers, and generates one or more administrative reports from the group consisting of: system-wide gaming reports; membership and player statistics; detailed statistics on specific games played by specific players; current status of the system, hardware, and software troubleshooting.

(Currently Amended)

7. A system according to Claim 1, wherein a plurality of mission control computers are maintained at respective mission control sites and are connected via a network to a network server that provides an online interface of the mission control system ~~to the Internet~~ for remote access by players.

(Original)

8. A system according to Claim 7, wherein said network server includes a master database for replicating game data from the mission control sites.

(Currently Amended)

9. A system according to Claim 8, wherein said online interface allows players to perform one or more activities of the group consisting of: looking up statistics for ~~games~~ game programs they have played; seeing ~~how their buddies are doing~~ the status of game programs being played by other players; seeing statistics for comparison to game programs played at other mission

control sites; downloading statistics for their own later use; maintaining their accounts; joining or maintaining their status with a group of players; and communicating with other players.

(Currently Amended)

10. A method for controlling multiple game playing satellite computers on a network comprising:

(a) providing a mission control computer for performing administrative functions for ~~multiple~~ a plurality of game playing ~~stations~~ satellite computers connected thereto on the network;

(b) ~~connecting multiple~~ maintaining at each of the plurality of game playing satellite computers on the network ~~to the mission control computer, each of which maintains~~ a plurality of game programs, and providing for access to a database of game-specific command sets for controlling the play of any of the ~~a~~ plurality of game programs on the game playing satellite computer;

(c) issuing from the mission control computer a generic "game start" ~~control~~ command to any designated one of the game playing satellite computers to start any selected game program, and

(d) the designated satellite computer responding to the generic "game start" command by loading from ~~its~~ said database a game-specific command set corresponding to the selected game program for allowing the selected game program to be played on the satellite computer, and providing the mission control computer with a status report of the status of the selected game program being played on the satellite computer.

(Original)

11. A method according to Claim 10, wherein the game program on the satellite computer generates a log file tracking the operation of the game program, and a satellite game control program on the satellite computer parses the log files for predetermined keywords indicative of desired status information and provides the status information to the mission control computer.

(Original)

12. A method according to Claim 10, wherein the satellite computer obtains status information on the game program from one or more of the following sources: game log files; dialog boxes or windows opened by the game program; messages from the Notification API; and a method

used by the game program for external communications.

Claim 13 (Canceled)

(Currently Amended)

14. A method according to Claim ~~13~~ 10, wherein each of the game-specific command sets is derived by analyzing each game program and determining ~~the~~ a standard configuration of ~~common~~ activation, termination and control logic control codes for ~~the~~ each game program.

(New)

15. A method according to Claim 10, wherein the control codes for the game-specific command sets for the game programs are configured based upon one of the group of game command architectures consisting of: keystrokes; http commands; TCP/IP commands; writing files; control APIs; and serial communications protocols.

AMENDMENT: SPECIFICATION

Abstract:

A "mission control" (administration) system for controlling multiple game playing satellite computers on a network employs a mission control program that sends generic control commands to ~~satellite control programs on~~ the satellite computers for controlling ~~any of the~~ game programs ~~available~~ to be played on the satellite computers. In response to a generic command to start a game program, the satellite computer's game control program loads a game-specific command set from its database for controlling the selected game program, and provides the mission control program with status information on ~~the status of~~ the game program. The game-specific command sets are derived by analyzing each game program and determining standard game control codes ~~the common activation, termination and control logic for the game~~. The game status information is derived by parsing ~~the~~ game log files and identifying keywords ~~indicating changes of status~~. A plurality of mission control sites can be connected via Internet to a network server which provides an online interface ~~of the mission control system~~ to players anywhere ~~to access game data from the mission control sites and communicate with other players~~.

A2

In the Paragraph on Page 8, beginning at line 29:

As a specific example, to control a PC-based game like "Quake", distributed by Activision, Inc., Santa Monica, CA, the computer system must send keyboard commands to the game window using the SendMessage and PostMessage commands of the Microsoft Windows (TM) operating system API functions. However, a network game like "Unreal Tournament" uses http commands for the game server, but requires Keybd_Event commands for the client station to control the game. Thus, the correct signals required for each of the game programs must be determined based upon the game's command architecture, e.g., keystrokes, http commands, TCP/IP commands, writing files, its control API, or via serial communications if there is a modem or a COM port on the computer. The Satellite Control Program can then interpret inputs from the player on the hardware console or network game commands sent from other stations via the network through an http interface into the correct signals required by the game to control its actions.

A3

In the Paragraph on Page 11, beginning at line 7:

The Mission Control system can be combined with 3D display programs and drivers to convert the game programs into a complete Virtual Reality experience. As described in commonly-owned U.S. Patent Application 10/011,027, filed on the same date, entitled "Virtual Reality Game System Using Pseudo 3D Display Driver", (incorporated herein by reference) popular PC games using Glide, OpenGL, and DirectX APIs can be converted for 3D stereoscopic displays for an immersive VR experience.